

# **DRAFT**

May 14, 2000

**TO:** CALFED Policy Group

**FROM:** Steve Ritchie, CALFED

**SUBJECT:** Proposed CALFED Environmental Justice Policy

## **Summary:**

A coalition of California organizations concerned with environmental justice has written several letters over the last year to CALFED, BDAC and CALFED agencies urging more attention to environmental justice problems related to the management of water in the Bay-Delta watershed. In these letters, these organizations have cited Federal legislation and a Federal Executive Order, and State legislation that require Federal and State agencies to address environmental justice issues within the scope of their programs and activities

Some environmental justice organizations also submitted detailed comments on the DEIS/R. Their principal demand has been that the CALFED Program actively express its commitment to addressing environmental justice issues stemming from actions the Program will be taking over the next thirty years in California. Their specific concerns include the potential effects of water management reforms on rural communities and the potential public health and financial impacts of ecosystem and water quality program actions on the large numbers of minorities and disadvantaged people living in urban areas.

At the April 13 BDAC meeting, and at the April 19 Policy Group meeting, several representatives of environmental justice organizations presented a letter outlining specific requests and recommendations to the CALFED Program for addressing these concerns (see Attachment A). After considering these recommendations CALFED staff with the assistance of senior staff of the U.S. E.P.A., have developed the following recommended actions for approval by the CALFED Policy Group.

## **Recommendations:**

The Policy Group is asked to consider the following three actions for addressing environmental justice concerns with the CALFED Program.

### ***Recommendation 1: Adopt a CALFED Policy Statement on environmental justice.***

The following statement is recommended for Policy Group approval as an expression of overall policy direction for the CALFED Program as it moves into implementation:

*"The CALFED program and its participating agencies are committed to seeking fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes, such that no segment of the population bears a disproportionately high or adverse health or environmental impact resulting from CALFED's programs, policies, or actions."*

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that CALFED has a process to identify and address environmental justice issues as the Program moves into implementation.**

- Assign staff and resources within the CALFED Program and in each CALFED agency to work with rural and urban environmental justice organizations within the CALFED solution area to identify and resolve environmental justice issues that may arise as a result of CALFED action.
- Assign CALFED or the appropriate CALFED agencies to gather additional demographic information (race, ethnicity and income) by watershed, within the CALFED solution area. Make this information accessible to CALFED agencies to assist in the identification of impacts, e.g. impact of proposed water transfers or other CALFED actions on local communities.
- Fund the participation of low income and minority representatives in the CALFED process to help identify issues and develop solutions. CALFED has initiated this type of assistance for California Indian tribes in FY00. Similar effort should be made to enable the participation of representatives of farm workers and Bay area urban interests who might be impacted by the CALFED program.
- Facilitate the direct participation of these groups in the Ag Water Management Council, the California Urban Water Conservation Council and the Delta Drinking Water Council.

**Recommendation 3: Direct CALFED agencies to fund actions to begin to resolve environmental justice issues as they are identified.**

- Define geographic regions and establish funding criteria such that the CALFED FY01 Watershed Program budget can be effectively used to assist communities in identifying, defining and addressing (on a watershed scale) potential environmental justice issues that may occur as a result of CALFED Bay Delta Program implementation.
- Working with the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Regional Water Quality Control Boards 2 & 5, Save San Francisco Bay Association and the San Francisco Estuary Institute, assess the potential need for additional fish contamination monitoring and consumption advisories in the Bay-Delta watershed. These agencies have just completed an extensive study, with public release of their report scheduled for summer 2000. If gaps are found, fund additional monitoring, analysis and or outreach, as appropriate.

**Action:** Decision.